

Master Plan Map Comments for
Planning District 10

Order:

- a. Submitted in Numerical Order (PD X – X.R)
- b. Staff Recommendation(s) in Numerical Order
(PD X- X)
- c. Multiple Amendments

PD 10 - 1R

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November 1, 2011

Via Facsimile 504.658.7032
and U.S. Mail

Yolanda Rodriguez
Executive Director
City Planning Commission
1340 Poydras St. Suite 900
New Orleans, LA 70112

Re: Amendment to Master Plan #PD10-1R

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:

On behalf of the owners of the Versailles Arms Apartments ("VAA"), please accept the following concerning the proposal to amend the Master Plan Map to change the zoning from Post-War Multifamily to Post-War Residential Single Family in the area south of Dwyer and north of Peltier Drive, District 10.

Based on the Proposed Amendment Map for District 10 showing the proposed change as being only that area between Dwyer and Peltier bounded by the Mischeaux Bayou on the west and Palace St. on the east, the owners of Versailles Arms Apartments do not oppose the proposed zoning map change. However, because the language of the proposed change describes the area affected by the zoning change simply as the "area south of Dwyer and north of Peltier," the owners of VAA object the wording of the change identified as #PD10-1R.

Versailles Arms Apartments I & II is a 368-unit multifamily housing community. The site makes up approximately 40% of the land between Dwyer Road and Peltier Drive. Prior to 2005, the property operated with a 100% Section 8 subsidy. Because of hurricane damage, the property is not in service at this time. However, the owners of the property recently secured bond inducement for the issuance of \$18,000,000 in revenue bonds from the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, and Louisiana State Bond Commission approval to issue up to \$18,000,000 in mortgage backed revenue bonds. The property also has 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits for \$1,514,072 from the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency. In September of this year,

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Yolanda Rodriguez
November 1, 2011
Page 2

Versailles Arms settled the litigation with the companies that insured the property at the time of the hurricane damage.

Since the hurricane, the owners have spent more than \$6,500,000 to rehabilitate the property. At this time, although unoccupied, the grounds are regularly maintained and the property is secured and monitored.

Since 2005, the roofs on all fifty two buildings were replaced with four inch built-up roof with additional insulation to increase R value. The mansard roofs/siding and flashing were replaced. All 2,600 windows were reframed to comply with current code and Life Safety ingress and egress guidelines, and will be replaced with double insulated hurricane rated windows for energy efficiency. We also reframed to meet ADA minimum requirements and replaced all deteriorated interior and exterior wood. All sewer lines were filmed and all identified problem areas have been replaced. Our Architect, C. Spencer Smith, AIA, LLC., is overseeing all of the work.

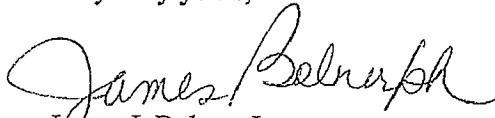
We are reconstructing all of the units with 5/8 inch fire rated sheetrock to increase the fire protection and lower insurance premiums to the property. Each unit will be energy efficient, totally electric and have all Energy Star rated central air conditioning and heat, refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, water heater, double insulated hurricane rated windows, mini blinds and floor tile.

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, all municipal services are back in operation. The site is well located for ease of travel to employment centers. Many services are available within five miles and most are available within two miles of the site. Medical services and schools are within one mile. Public transportation is within walking distance.

Current property management has maintained communication with the displaced residents scattered throughout the United States. 90% of the former residents wish to return to their New Orleans homes at the Versailles Arms Apartments upon completion of renovations. Of that 90%, ownership expects a minimum of 40% to return.

If #PD10-1R does, in fact, impact VAA, the owners of VAA ask that that City Planning Commission recommend against the proposed amendment.

Very truly yours,


James J. Bolner, Jr.

JJB/sh

cc: Jon D. Johnson (via email jdjohnson@nola.gov)
A.K. Gordon (via email)

January 25, 2012

City Commissioners
City of New Orleans

To All City Commissioners,

I, Reverend Dominic Nghiem Nguyen, Pastor of Mary Queen of Vietnam Church, am sending this letter to the City of New Orleans Board of Commissioners describing a brief history of our church and explaining the current existing plan for all of our church properties.

Mary Queen of Vietnam Parish is a Roman Catholic Church located at 14001 Dwyer Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70129. The church had been officially established in 1983 by Former Archbishop Philip M. Hannan, Archdiocese of New Orleans. Due to the increasing members of our congregation and the growing demand of the parish, early of 1990s, Mary Queen of Vietnam Church had purchased 28.23 acres of land (specifically as Parcel 9C located at 14000 Dwyer Blvd.,) and paid it off in full to expand the parish for her pastoral needs and service purposes. Within the past 22 years, Mary Queen of Vietnam Church has left the land as an empty lot in waiting to build church's shrines and future church building, but financial limitation has kept us on the set back. This private property owned by one single entity, Mary Queen of Vietnam Church, in which it belongs under the umbrella of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and has never changed in ownership or purposes.

Within the past few months, the parishioners of Mary Queen of Vietnam Church proposed to expand the parish activities. Our existing church and facility cannot be able to accommodate all the services; therefore, the church is working on the master plan to expand onto this vacant land. As the beginning of this year, 2012, this piece of 28.23 acres land is currently under the parish new development. The church plans to turn it into The Vietnamese Martyrs Park for year round church activities such as: the devotion of Our Virgin Mary, the Vietnamese Martyrs and Saints, Cultural events and annual celebrations. The plan also includes the meditation garden and the retreat ground within the park to accommodate the mentioned projects. Here is the general plan:

- 14 Stations of the Cross (build around the perimeter of the park) (2 years project)
- Meditation garden – private retreat (2 years project)
- Procession Road (build around the perimeter of the park) (2 years project)
- Parish future church (central focal point of the park) (15 years project)
- Shrine of Our Lady of Lavang (on one side of the park) (10 years project)
- Shrine of the Vietnamese Martyrs and Saints (on the other side of the park) (10 years project)

Moreover, in order to fulfill the needs of the parish in the social and physical aspects besides the use for Meditation Park, Mary Queen of Vietnam Parish also plans to develop this piece of ground for parking and recreational purposes. Within the 5 miles radius, there is no park or recreation area available for the parishioners. Since this church ground is well fence-guarded and surrounded by iron gates with security patrolled; safety is idealistic for the following services:

- Walk way and jogging pathway around the premises (*intended for the use of all parishioners of the church*)
- Create soccer fields, basketball and volley ball courts (*intended for youth recreation to create healthy habit in physical through sports*)
- Build outdoor game field and playground (*intended for young children of CCD and Cultural Program as P.E. curriculum*)
- Build extra parking

Funding for all church current and future projects comes directly from the parishioners' contributions, benefactors, and private in-kind donations. At this time, Mary Queen of Vietnam Church is working with specialists and engineers to draw the master plan for the church development projects. Upon approaching each construction phase, a blue print shall be submitted to the city for reviewing.

Since July of 2010, Mary Queen of Vietnam Church has appointed Mr. Giuseppe Anthony Tran to be a Parish Social Service Coordinator. He will be the main contact agent representing the parish in working with the City of New Orleans as well as with all public departments and organizations.

If there is any question, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Tran, myself, or the church office for more detail.

Respectfully,

Dominic Nghiem Nguyen
Pastor of Mary Queen of Vietnam Church

Giuseppe Anthony Tran
Parish Social Service & Coordinator
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